

Rhodora

JOURNAL OF

THE NEW ENGLAND BOTANICAL CLUB

Vol. 4

August, 1902

No. 44

TARAXACUM PALUSTRE IN AMERICA.

M. L. FERNALD.

MR. E. Williams Hervey sent me in May last a package of Dandelions from New Bedford, Massachusetts, containing *Taraxacum erythrospermum* and a larger-headed plant which he was unable to identify satisfactorily either with that species or *T. officinale*. The plant had the general aspect of the latter species, but the short deltoid erect outer bracts of its involucre suggested *T. erythrospermum*. From this species, recently recognized¹ as well established if not indigenous in New England, Mr. Hervey's plant differed in having quite plane or flat bracts to the involucre and greenish brown achenes, and in the slightly cleft or even merely undulate-dentate leaves. A comparison showed the plant to be unquestionably *Taraxacum palustre*, DC.² of Europe and northern Asia.

Taraxacum palustre is variously treated by European authors. By most, including Nyman, Reichenbach, Lange, Hornemann, and Hooker & Jackson, it is treated as a thoroughly distinct species; by others, as Bentham & Hooker, as a subspecies of *T. Dens-leonis* (*T. officinale*); while by Blytt it is considered a variety of the common species, and is called *T. officinale*, Weber, var. *palustre*, Blytt.³

Whether the plant is clearly distinct from *Taraxacum officinale* it has been impossible satisfactorily to determine the past season. Certain observations, however, are worth recording, that other observers may be prepared to study the tendencies of the dandelions in their own regions during the next spring.

¹ Fernald, Bot. Gaz. XX. 323.

² Fl. Fr. IV. 45.

³ Norg. Fl. i. 619.

After receiving Mr. Hervey's material I watched the dandelions in Cambridge and found that while large areas of the Cambridge Common and adjacent sections were occupied by *Taraxacum erythrospermum*, with corniculate-appendaged bracts, the outer short and ascending or merely spreading, and *T. officinale*, with the bracts all flat and unappendaged, the outer linear-lanceolate and strongly recurved even in bud, damp sheltered situations, especially roadside ditches and similar spots, were quite as often given over to *T. palustre*. And in a morning walk Mr. Walter Deane and I found *T. palustre* and *T. officinale* scattered indiscriminately by the sidewalks on Brattle Street. There, however, occurred some individuals which in their involucre were not clearly either species, and which suggested that the two plants are not specifically separable.

On May 30, in company with Messrs. Luman Andrews, C. H. Bissell, and J. R. Churchill, I visited Salisbury, Connecticut; and there by damp roadsides and in shaded dooryards and ditches *T. palustre* abounded, often to the exclusion of *T. officinale*; and though exceptional specimens showed a tendency to have more spreading bracts than in the extreme of *T. palustre*, none with the short deltoid or ovate-lanceolate outer bracts had them strongly reflexed as in *T. officinale*. From this character alone, we found it a simple matter to distinguish the two plants at some distance. The involucre character, seems, however, to be the only one by which the two plants are separable; and although that is usually so marked as to give the plant a characteristic appearance, the tendencies noted in Cambridge to a mingling of characters, lead me to conclude that it is best for the present to follow Blytt in treating *Taraxacum palustre* as a variety of *T. officinale*. The first of July *Taraxacum palustre* was found in damp soil in Cutler on the extreme eastern coast of Maine by Dr. G. G. Kennedy, Mr. E. F. Williams and the writer; and a few days later on the Aroostook River in Northern Maine by Mr. Williams and the writer.

Besides the fresh material studied during the spring, I have seen two herbarium specimens, one collected on Blue Hill, Milton, Massachusetts, by Dr. G. G. Kennedy in April, 1896, the other at Rutland, Vermont, by Mr. W. W. Eggleston in June, 1899. These collections indicate that the plant is to be expected over a broad range.

The three dandelions now known to be well established in New England may be quickly distinguished as follows.

* At least the inner bracts of the involucre with the keels thickened near the tips forming corniculate appendages: heads about 75-flowered, yellow: achenes reddish: leaves deeply and finely runcinate-pinnatifid.

T. ERYTHROSPERMUM, Andrz. Usually in dry soil, common in the coastal district, less so inland.

* * All (or nearly all) the bracts flat and unappendaged: heads larger, orange yellow: achenes greenish or brown: leaves less cut.

T. OFFICINALE, Weber. Outer bracts of the involucre lanceolate or linear-lanceolate, strongly reflexed even in bud. — Common and widely distributed.

Var. PALUSTRE, Blytt. Norg. Fl. i. 619 (*Leontodon palustris*, Smith, Fl. Brit. ii. 823. *Taraxacum palustre*, DC. Fl. Fr. iv. 45). Outer bracts shorter and broader, mostly ovate-lanceolate or deltoid, ascending. — Damp soil, Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut; and probably throughout.

GRAY HERBARIUM.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON NEW ENGLAND FERNS,— V.

GEORGE E. DAVENPORT.

NOTE 8.— *Supplementary.*

WOODSIA OBTUSA, Torrey. This fern should be added to my list in RHODORA, vol. 4, p. 49, as number 18 under C. For this year I found sterile fronds wholly green as late as March 2nd. Miss Slosson says of it: "Fertile fronds perishing in autumn, sterile fronds lasting into winter, decaying toward spring." Ledges. Me., N. H., Vt., Mass., R. I., Ct.

Mr. Gilbert has suggested the propriety of including *Onoclea sensibilis* and *Struthiopteris* in the list on account of the perennial duration of the fertile fronds.

Correction. — Dr. Graves, of New London, Connecticut, has called my attention to an error in crediting *Asplenium montanum* to limestone cliffs in Connecticut, and I gladly make the proper correction here. I shall always be glad to have any errors of mine pointed out and thankful to anyone who will call my attention to them so that I can make such corrections as may be necessary.